









MATERIALS FOR A  
HISTORY OF WHITE'S OPERA HOUSE  
Concord's Entertainment Center,  
1875-1920

Compiled from the files of the  
Monitor, from programs, and  
reminiscences by Elwin L. Page.

To the memory of  
HARLAN COLBY PEARSON,  
who nominated the compiler to attempt this  
work and whose superior  
knowledge of the subject  
he was unable to pass  
on for the delight of  
generations to come.



[1 July 1942]

104 North Main street, Concord., N.H.

Dear Judge:

Today I envy Mrs. Page and yourself the salty air of the Atlantic. Otherwise, North State street fills the bill as a summer resort, with the Rumford Coffee House just over the fence. But I do miss the zip of the sea breeze. The "belle of the nineties" (she disclaims the title) was Miss Gertrude Downing, in case you wish to make evertures to her for the scrapbook. In this connection I have thought of the late Charles Adams, veteran printer, father of Mrs. Bilsborough, and of the late Dave Adams, no relation. Charles Adams was one of the original Concord amateur players back in the seventies, and was Concord correspondent for Harrison Gray Fiske's Dramatic Mirror for many years. He and Dave both ought to have had mammoth collections of playbills, though not preserved, I fear. The Concord Room is a great institution and will so remain as long as you give it blood transfusions. What would happen to the Historical Society if Huntley should <sup>be</sup> case to hold up the hands of Otis. Foster Stearns says Professor Herbert Hill of Dartmouth, whom I do not know, is casting covetous eyes at the curatorship.

Yours as ever.

F.C.P. [Carson] (Harlow C. Benson)

This is the clue to the  
"G.D. Scrap Book."

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I.

GENESIS--1874-1875.

The year 1874 found Concord, like the rest of the country, suffering from a serious post-war depression. Our citizens, however, were doing an excellent job in beating the depression by means of projects initiated individually, without benefit of government aid. We were fast getting over the early village-street effect of Main Street. Only recently the Board of Trade Building, at the north corner of School Street, had risen on the site of the old house used as a post office, and now there had arrived by steamer a steel bell of over a ton weight, cast by Vickers in Sheffield, England. Mead, Mason & Company successfully raised it in May, to the delight of the sidewalk committee and to the glory of George A. Pillsbury, its donor. That same May the bell was raised in the new Walker School. Its pitch in G. tuned with the Board of Trade's E. (Monitor, April 30, May 4, 6, 21, 1874).

We were insisting that we were no longer a country village. It was a matter for superior smiles when George F. Drew came down from Groton, Vermont, registered at the Eagle, went to bed early, instead of seeing the sights, and blew out the gas. That rube joke of my early days came near not being a joke at all. Fortunately the Eagle has transoms, and Drew did not close his. So, though he slept with his window closed, as was then the nearly universal custom, he survived. (Monitor, April 23, 1874).

But we were going to tell about new building in Concord in 1874. That year E. C. Bailey of the Patriot erected and roofed in the brick block at the north corner of Depot Street now known as Smith's Block. At the same time Joseph P. Stickney carried to the same stage his new block at the north corner of Bridge Street.



John Gould  
C.D.



At the corner of Washington a new church was being built to take the place of the wooden edifice of the First Congregational Society destroyed the year before. Lorenzo D. Brown built a new brick block on Warren Street, near Main, and uncovered the old log pipes laid in 1800 to serve Gale's Tavern--the first water works in Concord.

(Monitor, April 21, 1874, May, 5, 18, June 2, July 22, Sept. 8, 24, October 1, November 7, December 15, 1874)

In 1874, Concord had for large halls Phenix Hall, still in existence, and Eagle Hall in Stickney's South Block. In the double stairways to the third floor one may still see indications of the hall on the third and fourth floors -- the Eagle Hall that once competed with Phenix, just as the two hotels did in those days. Traveling companies who came to one of the halls usually put up at the hotel that bore the same name, though sometimes the Elm House opposite Pleasant Street <sup>(Site of Dutton's Block and Pleasant St. Extension)</sup> came in for a share of the patronage. Neither hall was well adapted for theatrical performances. One has but to look at Phenix Hall now to understand the limitations of both. It is hard to understand how Edwin Booth could put up with the inconveniences of Phenix Hall. Yet he did for two nights in 1872, playing "Hamlet" on November 4 to the largest audience then ever gathered in Concord for dramatics, and "Richelieu" on the following night. The Monitor thought the second play much inferior to the first, but asserted that Booth's creation of the character of "Richelieu" was the superior. (Monitor, Nov. 4, 5, 7, 1872).\*

When Phenix Hall was visited twice in 1874 by "The Black Crook", carpenters had to enlarge the stage temporarily in order to accommodate the company of forty people. (Monitor, February 16, 26, 27, October 9, 1874). Of course there were no facilities for handling scenery properly. The same was true at Eagle Hall, and the lack was

\* For Hamlet, the trumpet calls were played off-stage. Years later, a local musician recalled that Booth never had a single "hand". On his exit after he had reached the height of his power in the graveyard scene, F.B. said, "This is a damned appreciative audience." (Monitor, January 31, 1889).



a matter for regretful comment. To Eagle Hall, for two nights in February, 1874, came Buffalo Bill, Texas Jack, and Wild Bill Hickok in "The Scouts", a drama supposedly based on their own experiences. With them they brought a dancer, Mlle. Morlacchi, who appeared in a musical burlesque called "Thrice Married", in which she was advertised to speak three languages--English, French, and Spanish--but it is supposed that she danced in only one, though she danced thrice. Incidentally she sang a cavatina from "Hernani". She was highly praised by the Monitor man, as was the acting of Buffalo Bill. That gentleman, whether a good actor or not, stands in my memory of his out-door shows as one who had a true sense of the theatrical. (Monitor, February 9, 10, 11, 1874). But the great dramatic success of 1874 was Maggie Mitchell in "Fanchon the Cricket", who, with seats at the unusual top price of one dollar, drew to Eagle Hall on October 7 the largest audience ever seen before that date at a drama. Booth and "Hamlet", though not forgotten, were surpassed in patronage. (Monitor, October 7, 8, 1874).

Already there was rising, across the street from Eagle Hall, a building that was to make it obsolete and drive Phenix Hall practically out of the theatrical business. But the new building did not begin as a theater at all. Its gradual development in purpose was interesting.

When the old American House was burned in 1867 the fine lot at the corner of Park Street was left an eye-sore. In 1868, under the presidency of Governor Harriman there was conceived the first of a series of fairs of the New Hampshire Mechanics Association. It was decided to hold the first fair in Concord. Eagle Hall would do for the light exhibits, but not for heavy machinery and power-driven machinery. So there was erected on the vacant lot



a temporary wooden building of one story, eighty by forty feet, with an ell thirty five feet square, in which was placed a steam boiler and engine. A truss bridge 110 feet long connected the "Fair" building with Eagle Hall, so that patrons would not have to incur the dangers of Main Street traffic. For three weeks from October 7 the exhibitions remained open. In Eagle Hall were hardware, cottons, woolens, glass, harness, shoes, carpets, rugs, printing and binding products, millinery, ladies' hand work. Two small halls in the Stickney Block were also in use. In Angelos Hall were furniture, pictures of all sorts, and musical instruments. In Tahanto Hall were sewing machines. The committee of arrangements were Lyman D. Stevens (father of the Judge), Moses Humphrey, and Nathaniel White. (Monitor, September 24, October 5, 6, 7, 1868).

The fair was later held in Manchester and the building on The American House lot fell into disrepute. For some time in the fall of 1872, "Professor" Pratt, the horse educator, occupied it for the teaching of methods of breaking horses and training them not to be afraid of umbrellas, music, and fire crackers. One of the large class of prominent citizens was Nathaniel White. (Monitor, November 4, 5, 1872). By 1874 the wooden shed had fallen to the low estate of a store-house.

Isaac Andrew Hill, youngest son of Governor Isaac, had been instrumental in getting the Board of Trade Building. Always fertile in ideas of improvements, Hill announced in April, 1874, that he had bought from Benning W. Sanborn for \$15,000 the lot at the corner of Park Street. He wished to have a Masonic Hall erected there, if the Masons favored removal from their hall at the corner of Pleasant Street, and he was having Edward Dow prepare a plan. He would sell and remove at once the fair building. (Monitor, April 25, 1874).



The venerable Asa McFarland, retired from business and chiefly interested in noting a changing Concord, had something to say about the blemishes on Main Street. He found a general opinion that one of the most conspicuous of them <sup>was</sup> the old fair building. It was, he found, the general opinion also "that so accessible and beautiful a lot should be occupied by a public edifice, for Masons, Odd Fellows, or other associate bodies." He noted that Isaac Andrew Hill, "our enterprising and persevering fellow citizen", was seeking stock subscriptions for a building. The lot was being measured preparatory to the drawing of plans. (Monitor, April 30, 1874).

A week later Hill had opened his book with a subscription by Nathaniel White for one hundred shares at \$100 each. (Monitor, May 7, 1874). There is no record that anybody else ever made a subscription, or that any fraternal order was interested in Hill's attractive scheme. Nathaniel White seemed to be the only man who wished to risk money.

Mr. White was then sixty-three years old, and the story of his life was typical of the nineteenth century. At the age of fifteen, he left his farm home in Lancaster to work for John Wilson, who was about to open the Columbian Hotel in Concord. He arrived here with one shilling in his pocket. His wages belonged to his father, but not his tips. When he was twenty-one he had saved \$250. Then, for the first and only time in his life, he borrowed money and bought a part interest in the Hanover stage, which he drove in person for a few years. That was in 1832. He paid his debt promptly, and had soon saved enough to buy into the Concord-Lowell stage route. In 1838, with William Walker of the Eagle Coffee House he began the express business between Concord and Boston. Three trips a week he made to Boston by stage, carrying express matter and performing errands in the metropolis.



When the Concord Railroad came through in 1842 he was in a position where he could, with others, arrange to do express business by railroad. By 1864 he and B. P. Cheney were the sole owners of Cheney & Company's United States & Canada Express. They covered all rail lines from Lowell and Lawrence north to Concord, whence they operated over the Northern and Boston, Concord & Montreal Railroads, with connections with the Passumpsic, the White Mountains, the Vermont Central, the Vermont & Canada and the Ogdensburgh lines. They had offices in Boston, Lowell, Lawrence, Nashua, and Concord. (Monitor, January 7, 1874). The property was later acquired by the American Express Company. It made both Cheney and White wealthy.

White had "branched out" gradually. In 1846 he bought the farm on Clinton Street now owned by the State Hospital and enjoyed it until his death there in 1880. <sup>(at the farm)</sup> His town home was in the rear of the Columbian Hotel, where his local career began, and occupied most of the space between Capitol and School Streets where the State Office Building now stands. He also built White's Block on Capitol Street, now the Concord Electric Building. He became the owner of the Eagle Hotel and put his son John A. White in charge, but with little financial gain to himself.

Nathaniel White acquired in Armenia S. Aldrich, of Boscawen, a truly remarkable wife. I knew her at the end of her long life as an old lady of wonderful sprightliness and keenness. She and her husband were in the front of every advance movement of the day. They began in the anti-slavery work at a very early date, and were in the confidence of William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Lucy Stone and other leaders. Their barn was a station of the underground railway. They were of the first crop of woman's suffragists, and deeply interested in temperance reform. Their benevolences were



many and large.

When, on July 1, 1874, Nathaniel White took over the property from Isaac Andrew Hill, he had in mind a philanthropy. He began to demolish the old store-house at once, and announced that he would erect a three-story brick block, for business purposes, similar in architecture to Sanborn's Block, at Capitol Street, thus making a harmonious setting for the State House. He let it leak out that the Young People's Union would have a hall in it. (Monitor, July 8, 9, 1874). He had not yet got the notion of White's Opera House, but the germ was there, and it grew fast.

The Young People's Union requires attention if we are to understand the genesis of the Opera House. That organization centered about the Universalist parish, of which the Whites were the chief supporters. But it brought into its membership most of the young and ardent people from other churches.

In White's Block were the Fraternity Rooms, designed by Mrs. White for social and business meetings connected with the Universalist Society, the New Hampshire Woman's Suffrage Association, and other organizations in which she was interested. In the spring of 1872 the rooms were damaged by fire. When they were reopened on November 15, 1872, the young people put on a drama called "The Silent Protector". (Monitor, November 16, 1872). I think that the Union resulted from this. In the course of a year it was well organized, with several departments, social, literary, scientific, and artistic. In the last category, under the leadership of J. H. Morey, was the dramatic group.

The Union seem to have had their early meetings in the Fraternity Rooms, but they soon outgrew them, and had to meet in Rumford Hall (in Low's Block), opposite School Street, and



later in Angelos Hall, the dining room connected with Eagle Hall. By the end of the 1873-74 season, the dramatic group were giving a monthly change of bill in Eagle Hall. Among others in this group were Frank Cressy, father of the professional Will; Mrs. G. Scott (Belle Marshall) Locke; Dr. Towle, the dentist; Ned (E. Wyatt) Kimball, to whom fell the very-so-English parts; Frank E. Brown, Frank W's father; Jim (James C.) Norris; Harry F. Groves, a real Englishman, who could sing as well as act. Another singer-actor was <sup>Frank</sup> ~~Mr.~~ Hayden, ~~probably Marshall M., a photographer in the employ of H. P. Moore who published some of the well-known views of Concord.~~ It was a group of considerable and varied talents. While the Opera House was being erected, they advanced from trifles to "The Cricket on the Hearth", Tennyson's "Dora", "Lend Me Five Shillings", "Lady Audley's Secret", and "Don Caesar de Bazan", quite in the professional run of the day. By this time Nathaniel C. Nelson, the jeweler, was advancing to big parts, being the "Don Caesar" to Dr. Towle's "Don Jose." It was at the time when their last and best Eagle Hall season was being planned, and after the foundation of the Opera House was begun, that Nathaniel White announced that the new building would be carried up to four stories, and that the hall would be 54 by 90 feet, twenty-five feet high, with a gallery, and that the hall would be approached by entrances from both Main Street and Park Street. (Monitor, February 25, March 25, April 22, May 20, June 8, 11, 19, October 13, 14, November 10, 11, December 8, 1874. January 2, February 23, March 1, 3, 31, April 28, June 14, 16, 1875; September 1, 1874).

Mr. White was really interested. He worked about the building himself, fell and dislocated a shoulder. The brick made by Thomas D. Bean at East Concord was laid so rapidly during a long



spell of fair weather, that the walls went up like magic. Only one day was lost because of rain. Work on the roof started on November 13. (Monitor, September 1, 10, 24, October 24, November 10, 13, 1874).

At noon on November 14 the last brick was laid with formality, and all of the workmen went over to Angelos Hall for a complimentary dinner given by Mr. White. There was a concert by Blaisdell and Ingalls's Orchestra, while the nearly forty workmen and a few guests ate oysters, turkey, roast beef, vegetables, pastry, and fruit. After that, and coffee, Mr. White said simply that he had taken the deed on July 1 and on the same day engaged Edward Dow as architect. Then he turned the meeting over to Mr. Dow, who gave the statistics. The building was 80 by 84 feet, 65 feet 4 inches high. Then he announced for the first time that the hall would be called White's Opera House. It would be 54 by 88 feet, with a stage 16 by 32, dimensions somewhat changed before completion. The foundation was by Morrill & Woods. George W. Emerton furnished the underpinning, window caps and sills. Hall B. Rand had laid in forty-five days the 550,000 brick, employing ten masons and ten tenders from September 14 to November 14. Lorenzo Dow had done the frame and wood work. In four days the tinning would be completed, and the building ready for the winter. Then there were speeches by Henry P. Rolfe, Judge Sylvester Dana, John M. Hill, George G. Fogg, Harvey Rice, Woodbridge Odlin, and Hall B. Rand. And then the men went back to work. (Monitor, Nov. 14, 1874).

After that progress was normal. The walls were cleaned and the staging removed within a few days (Monitor, November 19, 1874), and the winter work on the interior begun. On March 23, 1875, the Monitor announced, "The boiler has been put into White's Opera House, and is now being adjusted in place. The lathing of



the building is nearly on and the fair proportions of the interior begin to show to advantage." As completion neared, the verdict was, "It is an ornament to our city." (Monitor, June 24, 1875). When the interior decoration was done there was great delight. Nothing like it had before been known here. "The fresco and ornamental work elicit admiration from all beholders. The hall is spacious, light, airy and beautifully proportioned. The Y. P. U. are to be congratulated." (Monitor, July 8, 1875). The finishing touches only remained. It was announced on September 3 that the Opera House would be opened on the 13th. The Y. P. U. was planning a brilliant season in their new quarters, and their new scenery was described as perfectly splendid. (Monitor, September 3, 1875).

The Opera House occupied the third and fourth floors of the building. The entrance stair from Park Street was seven feet wide, that from Main Street was six feet. From the second floor to the third the stairway was only eight feet. Later another exit was provided from the north side of the Opera House, and still later a single fire escape from the north side of the gallery, but by some miracle there was never a fire or a stampede when the hall was in use. The architects of 1875 had small knowledge of theater exits. That knowledge grew from disasters.

The stairway to the third story landed on the Park Street side of the building. East of it was a corner room, 21 feet square, designed for a reading room for the Young People's Union. West of the landing on the third floor was a room 28 by 21 feet intended for the use of the Y. P. U. as music room, but later used as green room, property room or refreshment room. It opened into the hall. On this floor was also a coat room. Above, on the fourth floor, was the landing for entrance to the gallery, also two



rooms of rather indeterminate use, all on the south side.

Exclusive of the stage, the hall was 66 by 54 feet. The rear was elevated eighteen inches, but the rest of the floor was left perfectly flat. On it were settees seating 690. The settees folded for storage when the floor was required for other than theatricals or meetings or lectures or concerts. Years later, movable sections made an inclined plane from the elevation in the rear, on which seats were set. The gallery always had 376 theater seats, with iron frames and leather upholstery. For many years, in consequence of the superior seats and superior visibility, gallery seats were in more demand than those on the floor, and were correspondingly priced. The total seating capacity was 1066.

The stage was made larger than at first planned, being 22 by 34 feet. Even this proved to be inadequate, so years later a wooden overhang was let out over the alley to the west of the building, which added much to the ease of handling scenery and properties. Mr. White provided at the beginning twelve different sets of scenery, besides wings and flies. The footlights, of course, were rigged for illuminating gas, as were the wing and fly lights. On each side of the stage were four dressing rooms, each ten by fourteen, a more convenient and suitable arrangement than we have since known in Concord.

The proscenium was handsomely decorated. The ceiling frescoes were striking. There were the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. White, also the emblems of drama and music, and the portraits of four women of the stage.

On the second floor there were two offices on each side of the Main Street stair for business use. In the middle, facing the stairs to the Opera House, was the box office.\* In the southwest

\* Not the first - but the final - location.



corner was a large room. From this one could enter a smaller room on the west side and a little cubby over the Park Street door. Dr. J. Harry Gallinger, active in the Y. P. U., little thought that these rooms were to be the headquarters of the Republican State Committee, and that he as Chairman was to occupy the cubby for many years and be the political arbiter of the State until 1910, when the reform movement pushed him out of the Chairmanship, but not out of the United States Senate. By that time he had dropped his youthful name Harry and lived up to the Jacob that he seems to have grown to the dignity of.

A north and south corridor on the second floor led to Union Hall, the non-patriotic origin of whose name no longer need be in doubt. It was intended, and used for some years, as the place for the small meetings of the literary and scientific departments of the Y. P. U. It was also designed for other small meetings and as a dining room, after the fashion of Angelos Hall across the street. It was 18 by 53 feet, with its long dimension along the north wall. Connected was a kitchen 10 by 13 feet.

The ground floor had a large corner store, also a small one on Park Street and small ones on Main to the north of the big store. There was a ventilating system, none too good, for the Opera House, and five fire hydrants. The total cost of the whole was about \$60,000, large in those days, but trifling in these days. Such a building now would cost three or four times as much. That was one of the compensations of the days of deflation after the Civil War. ( Monitor, September 14, 1875, and recollections of the author).

But an investment of so much as \$60,000, largely by way of helping out the Y. P. U., required some balancing by way of rents. The problem of finding them must have puzzled Mr. White. He did not



ask the Federal Government to finance his project, nor did he borrow a dollar for the building. But he did not hesitate to rent space to Uncle Sam. That led to some heart-burnings. When the United States Pension Office moved to the building, nobody objected; they undoubtedly got improved quarters for what they were willing to pay. (Monitor, October 27, 1875). But before the walls were done, a suggestion had been made that the Post Office be moved from School Street to the new building. Move the Post Office north forty rods? That was unthinkable to the south-enders, and the ancient north-south feud was soon on again. The Board of Trade spent a whole evening debating the question, and voted, one dissenting, that it ought not to be moved north; it ought to go south to Warren Street, <sup>if</sup> not to Pleasant, and be nearer the business center. (Monitor, November 3, 1874). "Equal Rights" thought so strongly that it took a long letter to relieve his mind. (Monitor, November 13, 1874).

Thus the matter lay for nearly a year. Then it became known that Mr. White had been to Washington and called to the Postmaster General's attention the advantages of his corner store. The Monitor was indignant because private interest was overruling public good. Mr. White calmly let it be known that if an agent should come from Washington to look into the matter, there would be a full hearing, at which he would be represented by a committee, and the opponents could be represented by theirs. The Monitor editors, doing business at the corner of Depot Street, were not much mollified, but some of their directors and stockholders induced them to change their tune on the ground that Mr. White should have some consideration for his "creditable, commodious and ornamental building and opera house." (Monitor, November 4, 5, 11, 1875). Washington moved slowly. Finally Special Agent Bigelow conducted an all-day hearing here on April 20, 1876.

George G. Fogg led off for Mr. White, followed by Oliver Pillsbury. Their ability was discounted because they were both north-enders.



Lewis Downing tried to be impartial, but could not disguise the fact that his life was south of School Street. There was some talk, also more or less impartial-sounding, from Lowell Eastman, Dr. Willard, Mayor George A. Pillsbury, James R. Hill, and George E. Jenks of the Monitor but it was plain to see that none of them had a home or a place of business north of School Street. (Monitor, April 21, 1876). After that, things moved faster. Postmaster Larkin had orders in July to execute a lease for quarters in White's Opera House building. Soon after that he received the first two iron street letter-boxes ever seen here, and offered to put one up in front of the Monitor office. And he moved into his new quarters on September, a full year after the building was completed. (Monitor, July 28, August 19, September 16, 1876).

One of the objections to moving north was that there was no decent sidewalk north of Capitol Street. The city remedied that, and got a good walk as far north as the Court House. The Monitor was pleased. "It will be no longer necessary for pedestrians who travel that route, to wear india rubber boots in summer, and snow shoes in winter..." The good work ought to be pushed on to Chapel Street, which leads one to suspect the author as living that far north. (Monitor, August 11, 1876).\*

One more point of connection with the Opera House should be mentioned before we come to its opening. In the Eagle Hall days tickets for that place of amusement had commonly been sold at the Eagle Book Store, owned by W. H. Fisk of Manchester, but in charge for several years of Frank P. Mace. Mr. Fisk having died, Mr. Mace bought the business within a fortnight of the opening of the Opera House. Thereafter tickets for Opera House attractions were almost without exception sold at "Mace's", 86 North Main

\* Possibly Fred Leighton



Street, in advance of performances, while Frank himself presided in the box office on show nights. (Monitor, September 28, 1875).

On the evening of September 13, there was a "Grand Dedication Concert" by the Germania Orchestra of twenty. This Boston organization was one of the best and most noted of the time. With the players appeared as soprano soloist Mrs. H. M. Smith of Boston, a fine singer who was a great Concord favorite. The concert was preceded by dedicatory exercises in which Mr. and Mrs. White participated. The Rev. E. L. Conger of the Universalist Church made the opening remarks. Then there was a fervent dedicatory prayer by Rev. F. D. Ayer of the First Congregational Church, followed by congratulatory remarks by the Rev. J. A. Eames of the Episcopal Church and Mr. Ayer. Mr. White thanked the speakers. The Concord public soon had occasion to recall with amusement or horror the remark of Mr. Conger that the character of the entertainments to be given in White's Opera House depended on the people. (Monitor, September 14, 1875).

In six weeks time "The Black Crook" appeared on those boards blessed by the clergy. It was at least six years later that I recall my parents bewailing the fact that dear Mr. Ayer had been bemused into giving that fervent dedicatory prayer, only to have Mr. White put on "The Black Crook" in a very short time. The Monitor cannily refrained from suggesting that the show was really given, in spite of advance advertisements, but on the day following the reputed presentation Dr. Eames had in the paper a sorrowful and disillusioned letter. I never saw the play of vaudeville, or whatever it was that went by the fearsome name. Perhaps the objection to it may be summed up in the characterization of it by the Monitor concerning a performance announced the year before for Phenix Hall: "Lovers of the leg---itimate drama



will remember the time and place, and be on hand." Those were probably the words of the advance agent, for there was no review of the show in the Monitor of 1874. (Monitor, October 9, 1874). What would be the reaction of my parents' generation to the modern unclothed limbs (as they were termed in my boyhood home), passes imagination. Anyhow, there is no longer any suspicion that tights covered artificial figures. One thing can be said: the company probably appreciated improved stage and dressing-room accommodations.

Appropriately, however, the Young People's Union gave the first dramatic performance in the new theater. That was on September 13. There was a double bill. "The Warlock of the Glen" and "Lend Me Five Shillings". Members were charged twenty and thirty-five cents, others had to pay thirty-five and fifty cents. The music for the occasion was interesting. John W. Odlin played the piano and had as companions two members of the Germania Band, Carl Weinz, violin, and August Schlimper, flute. The opening piece was composed for the occasion by Mr. Odlin. (Monitor, September 17, 1875).



II

THE FIRST SEASON---1875-1876.

The first season was not marked by many outstanding appearances of traveling companies. The earliest of all was the inevitable "Uncle Tom's Cabin", with Mrs. G. C. Howard as Topsy, on September 17. It drew a larger audience than the dedicatory concert or the opening performance by the Y. P. U. It was declared to be the best performance of this perennial play ever given here. (Monitor, September 18, 1875). Not having been born at that time, I cannot remember whether that troupe carried a band and had a street parade as was the usual custom during my boyhood days. For us youngsters it was enough to watch the parade, with the "fierce" bloodhounds, and to hear the band play at the Opera House door before the performance. I, at least, never had any consuming desire to see Eliza totter across the stage ice, or to witness the transformation of flaxen-haired Little Eva. I saw those things once when I was pretty well-grown, and once was enough for my taste.

An even larger audience, the largest up to that time locally, greeted Maggie Mitchell and William Harris in "The Pearl of Savoy". Blaisdell's Orchestra furnished the music. (Monitor, October 30, 1875). In February the Union Square Comedy Company appeared in Boucicault's "Lad Astray". The first four days in March, 1876, John Murray and Grace Lillian appeared in repertoire, giving "Rip Van Winkle" twice, Murray's own play "Estranged", "Out of the Depths", and "The Ticket of Leave Man", at flat prices of fifty cents. (Monitor, February 26, March 2, 3, 4, 1876). The Globe Theater Company of Boston appeared twice, on March 30 in "Our Boys", as played two hundred nights in London and seventy-seven in Boston, and in Robertson's "Caste" on June 15. This was the most notable dramatic com-



pany of the season. George Honey, the leading comedian, was an actor of great repute in his day. Robertson wrote the part of "Old Eccles" in "Caste" for him and he created it in London. Of his support, J. W. Lanergan first played the part of Captain Hawtree in America. For the performance of "Caste" Mrs. Thomas Barry was borrowed from the Boston Theater Company to replace Miss Lillian Conway of the Globe, who was ill.

The great Harrigan and Hart team demonstrated the musical show in "The Doyle Brothers" on May 16, like all their productions clean and bright, "an evening's fun such as is rarely doled out to us." (Monitor, May 17, 1876).

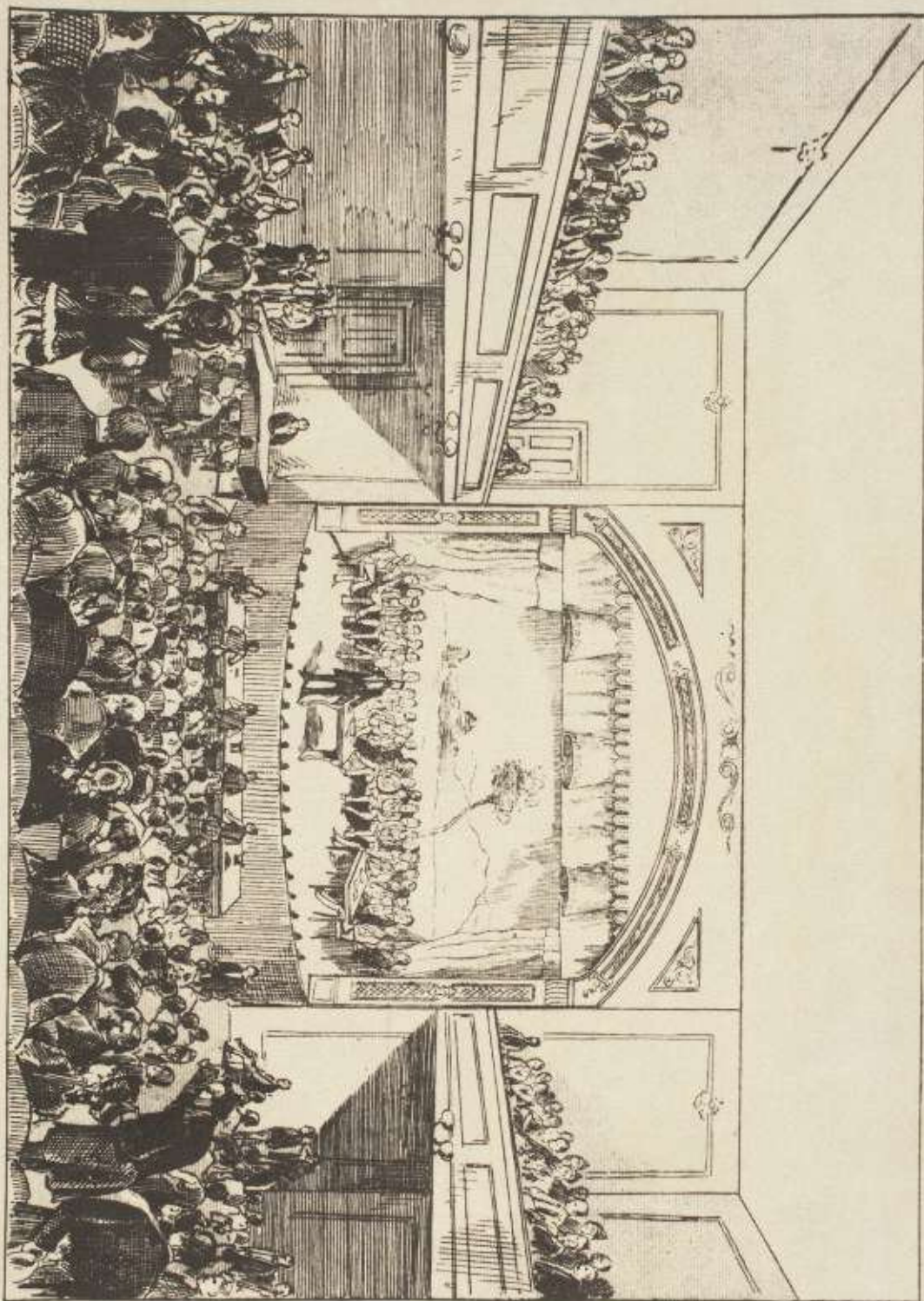
There was the usual hodge-podge of minstrel shows, negro singers, and what-not. For true operetta, there was the Richings-Bernard English Opera Company of four solo singers and a chorus, who gave first Eichberg's "Rose of Tyrol", which the reviewer was clear-sighted enough to say was "not destined to lasting popularity" and on a return engagement an also-forgotten piece, "The Brewer of Preston", which was much more pleasing. (Monitor, November 29, December 13, 1875). More attractive appears to have been the appearance of a similarly constituted group, the Rudolphsen English Opera Company of Boston in Balfe's "Sleeping Queen" and Gilbert and Sullivan's "Cox and Box". (Monitor, June 23, 1876).

The Y. M. C. A. lecture course transferred to the Opera House, presenting some of the most noted men of the day, including Robert Collyer, Dr. Willits, Dr. Marvin R. Vincent, and Wendell Phillips, who repeated "The Lost Arts" which he had given in Concord twenty-two years before. For good measure the course included Henry Clay Barnabee and his famous concert company. The Y. P. U. put on a lower-priced course of <sup>lectures by</sup> ~~entertainments~~ Mary A. Livermore, Dr. George C. Lorimer,



J. H. Gallinger.  
New Hampshire.  
February 12, 1918.





A SESSION OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE TEMPERANCE REFORM CONVENTION AT WHITE'S OPERA HOUSE, CONCORD, N. H.  
(FROM A PICTURE BY OUR NEIGHBOR, ARTIST.)



Professor E. S. Morse, and others. There were "free-lance" lectures by Theodore Tilton and Ann Eliza Young, "the nineteenth wife of Brigham". Frequent social assemblies were held by the Y. P. U. Firemen's balls and the Unitarian May Party became fixtures, and the High School Class of 1876 was glad to graduate in the Opera House instead of the stuffy High School Hall. Here was forwarded the movement for the organization of the New Hampshire Centennial Home for the Aged, and here were the gala events connected with the centennial year. All of these things, and more, will be found in the Bookings that follow.

Something about the great temperance reform movement of the season must be told. On December 9 there was a great meeting in the Opera House. Col. Peter Sanborn presided. The Reform Club of Manchester, 400 strong, came up with a drum corps. They were welcomed by Dr. J. H. Gallinger. There were testimonials by reformed drunkards. Mrs. White appealed for pledges, and about one hundred signed. This was the beginning of a temperance revival under the leadership of J. K. Osgood of Maine. The next night the Whites again threw open the doors of the Opera House, and the Concord Reform Club was organized. Dr. Gallinger was chosen President, and accepted temporarily until a reformed man could be found to take the place. Nathaniel White was chosen Treasurer. For the third successive evening, the Opera House had a temperance revival meeting on December 11. Daily meetings followed in churches and Eagle Hall over the week-end, and then they came back to the Opera House on the 15th. The event of that night was when Henry W. Clapp, later mayor, and then foreman at the Ford & Kimball foundry, led all but two of his men up to sign the pledge, and later took them to Carroll's for oysters. The unregenerate suggested that the men were under the



duress of their employers, but Messrs. Ford and Kimball were both out of town and never heard about the voluntary action of their men until later. Many more signers were obtained in the Opera House on the 17th, 18th and 19th. On the 18th the principal speaker was the venerable Dr. Bouton, who had begun the first temperance movement in Concord a generation before. By this time the Club had nearly a thousand enrolled members. The Club could no longer depend on the Opera House, with its many conflicting dates, so it was voted to lease Eagle Hall for a year. This was done, but before arrangements could be made, the Club was <sup>given</sup> ~~withdrawn~~ free use of the Opera House for many more meetings. The last meeting there was held January 16, 1876, when the total of pledges received mounted to 1800. After that the Club had meetings Sunday nights in Eagle Hall, and sometimes on other days. Deputations went out to other towns. Everywhere Reform Clubs were being formed. The new President, John W. Drew, was soon giving his full time to the work. Temporary President Gallinger was active in speaking here and elsewhere. He was famous for good speaking, even in those early years, and the acquaintances gained in his going about must have had no little to do with the favorable attention he had later when he sought political office in the national field. But about the sincerity of his motives there was never a doubt. Some of the old-line politicians tried to climb on the band-wagon. When E. C. Bailey volunteered to address a meeting here, there was a tendency to recall that when he was a candidate for office his views seemed not to be "temperance." Even John George spoke at a meeting of the reform element in Contoocook, which was perfectly alien to his local reputation. (Detailed references appear in the Bookings appended).



The great increase in the movement led to the organization of the State at an all-day and evening convention of Reform Clubs held in the Opera House on February 24, 1876. Needless to say, all this meant pure philanthropy on the part of Nathaniel White. Perhaps my parents ought to have forgiven Mr. White for "The Black Crook", for they were temperance enthusiasts.

Comment is due upon the rest of the dramatic season of the Y. P. U. after their opening. They missed but one month in their appearances, which were marked by the gradual emergence of N. C. Nelson as the real star of the group, first particularly praised in the November production of "Michael Erle, or the Maniac Lover". Some of their offerings were repeats of former productions, but they hit the highest mark when they undertook, at the request of the Knights of Pythias, the drama called "Damon and Pythias" in January. Mr. Nelson was "Pythias" and Frank Cressy was "Damon." Others were Dr. Towle as "Dionysius, Mrs. Locke as "Calanthe", and Miss Belle Larkin as "Hermione". It was declared to be the "best amateur dramatic representation ever witnessed in Concord." Half of the audience was in tears during the parting scene. So great was the enthusiasm that a repetition was demanded for the next week, for the benefit of the company, when Mrs. Locke, on account of the illness of Miss Larkin, doubled. Later the company, with a carload of ~~the~~ admirers, went to Manchester and performed the play there.

They tried "Our American Cousin" with a success that was somewhat restricted by insufficient stage accommodations. We do not know the cast, but it would be almost certain that Ned Kimball was the Dundreary.\* This play by the noted Tom Taylor, to the modern mind a creaking vehicle, was in its day much ad-

mired and was played by the leading professionals. It is now  
\* Program discovered after above written. Kimball was Dundreary. Henry P. Moore was Alvin Threlkeld.



remembered only for its creation of Lord Dundreary and as the play during whose action Abraham Lincoln was assassinated.

Ned Kimball did a part that season which was much acclaimed, that of Juliet in a burlesque operetta, "Capuletta, or Romeo and Juliet Revived." But "the most complete dramatic representation ever given by them" was a drama that survived into the present generation, "Ingomar, the Barbarian", the cast of which appears under the Bookings that follow.

Other amateur dramatics in the Opera House that season should be mentioned. The Catholic Independent Club repeated "Ireland As It Is", given the year before, with "Paddy Miles's Boy", the leads being taken by William H. Happny, Thomas Gallagher, and Mary Twomey. For two days "Laila", a children's fairy operetta, held the boards under the direction of Miss Carrie E. Gray of Dover, with special scenery and costumes. The names of the little principals, only one of whom is still among us, appear under the Bookings. Only one need be mentioned here. Maud Dixon, later to become a professional, was in the fairy dance and shared in the familiar Reuben and Rachel number between scenes. It probably was her debut.

For pure music there was Theodore Thomas and his orchestra of sixty, then incomparable in the United States, one of the great events in Concord's musical history. But we should not forget the Board of Trade concert by Brown's Band of Fisherville (Penacook), an organization of great note in its day, with Jean Missud, the distinguished clarinetist, as one of the soloists.

Altogether the first season of the Opera House was a fine one, and no little part of its success was due to the community effort of amateurs which it was a prime object of Mr. White to foster.



Andante



New Haven April 3<sup>rd</sup> 1849.

Germania

Musical Society.

Leader C. Lensberg

<sup>Carl</sup> Charles Lerrahn Louis Ohlemann

Charles Stein.

\* F. Friede.

W. Buchheister.

Joachim Schuch

C. Lenth.

\* August. Besig.

Ernst Pfäffer.

A. Hanner.

H. Lohle

Th. Hennrich

H. Albrecht.

Th. Mann

Ragemann.

\* V. Schickel

Ch. Kjerthe.

M. Moritz.

Laaso.

Kiechblock.

\* Carl S. Batke.

Helmuth.

ef.  
ermore.  
1874.



Character is destiny.  
Mary A. Livermore.  
Feby. 27, 1874.

Yours Heartily  
Geo. C. Lorimer



Bookings, First Season, 1875-76.

Date.	Event.	Refer to <u>Monitor.</u>
Sept. 13.	Dedication Germania Orchestra of Boston, 20 pieces Mrs. H. M. Smith, Boston, soprano 50 and 75 cents <i>Program, B. L. White Collection</i>	Sept. 14
16.	Y. P. U. "The Warlock of the Glen" "Lend Me Five Shillings" Music by John W. Odlin, piano Carl Weinz, violin August Schlimper, flute Opening music composed by Odlin Members, 20-35 cents; others 35-50 cents	Sept. 17
17.	"Uncle Tom's Cabin" Topsy, Mrs. G. C. Howard Uncle Tom, George Kunkel St. Clair, Mr. Howard Eva, Mabel Leonard	Sept. 18
22.	Slave Cabin Singers from Central Tennessee College, Nashville five ladies, three gentlemen 35-50 cents	Sept. 23
28.	Y. P. U. Scientific Department Lecture Mary A. Livermore, "Husbands" Members, 10 cents; others, 25; reserved seats, 15 cents extra	Sept. 29
29. 30. Oct. 1.	Exhibition, Concord Horticultural Society	Sept. 30
11.	Readings by Prof J. W. Churchill of Andover Theological Seminary 35 cents	Oct. 12
12.	Y. P. U Literary Department Lecture Rev. George C. Lorimer, D. D., "Lost Virtues" Members, 10 cents; others, 25 cents; reserved seats, 10 cents extra	Oct. 13
18.	Y. P. U. Scientific Department Free Lecture Prof. E. S. Morse, "How Animals Move" (chalk talk)	
19.	Same Prof. E. S. Morse, "Wonders of Growth in Animals" (chalk talk)	
20.	Y. M. C. A. Course Lecture Gen. Kilpatrick, "Stump Oratory and Orators"	Oct. 21
21.	Board of Trade Concert Brown's Band of Fisherville Jean Missud, clarinet soloist	Oct. 22



Yours truly  
Maggie Mitchell  
Toldeo Ohio

Robert Calleyer

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Bookings, First Season, 1875-76.

- |          |  |   |
|----------|--|---|
| Oct. 25. | "The Black Crook"<br>Original New York production<br>30, 50, 75 cents  | Oct. 25, 26                                       |
| Oct. 26. | Y. P. U., Robertson's "School"<br>Music by Blaisdell   | Oct. 27<br><i>Program, B. B. White Collection</i> |
| 27.      | Y. M. C. A. Course Lecture<br>Henry Vincent, England<br>"Philosophy of True Manliness"   |   |
| 29.      | "The Pearl of Savoy"<br>Maggie Mitchell, William Harris,<br>Varrey, Irving, Miss Wyndham<br>Blaisdell's Orchestra  | Oct. 30<br><i>Program, B. B. White Collection</i> |
| Nov. 2.  | Y. P. U. Social Meeting  | Nov. 2  |
| 3.       | Buckley's Serenaders and Burlesque<br>Opera Troups (minstrels)<br>30, 50, 75 cents   | Nov. 2  |
| 4.       | Y. M. C. A. Course Concert<br>Barnabee Concert Company   | Nov. 5  |
| 9.       | Y. P. U. Literary Department Free Lecture<br>George T. Angell, "The Relation<br>of Animals that Speak to Those<br>which are Dumb."   | Nov. 8-10   |
| 11.      | Y. M. C. A. Course Lecture<br>Robert Collyer, "Clear Grit"<br>(his first appearance here)  | Nov. 12   |
| 13.      | Y. M. C. A. Course Lecture on travel<br>Dr. Willits  | Nov. 19   |
| 23.      | Y. P. U. "Michael Erle, or the Maniac Lover"<br>N. C. Nelson in the lead   | Nov. 24   |
| 25.      | I. W. Hill's 4th Annual Thanksgiving<br>Assembly, for "Young and Old"<br>Blaisdell's Orchestra, 8 pos<br>H. W. Ranlet, floor director<br>gallery, 50 cents; floor, \$1   | Nov. 26   |
| 26.      | Y. M. C. A. Course Lecture<br>Rev. Marvin R. Vincent, D. D.<br>"Sunday Schools"  | Nov. 30   |
| 27.      | Richings-Bernard English Opera Company<br>Eichberg's "The Rose of Tyrol"<br>Caroline Richings Bernard,<br>Mrs. Henry Drayton, Pierre<br>Bernard, tenor, John J. Benitz<br>chorus 50-75 cents<br>"not destined to lasting<br>popularity". | Nov. 29   |







Bookings, 1875-76

Nov. 30.	Y. P. U. Social Department 10 cents	Nov. 30
Dec. 7.	Y. P. U. Literary Department, free Dr. Gallinger presided Speeches by Rev. E. L. Conger and Lyman D. Stevens Music, readings and a paper. Announced that hereafter the reading and amusement rooms will be open 7-9.30 P. M.	Dec. 6-7
9.	Temperance Reform Meeting (details in Chapter II)	Dec. 10
10.	Reform Club organized (details in Chapter II)	Dec. 11
11.	Reform Club meeting	Dec. 13
13.	Richings-Bernard English Opera Company "The Brewer of Preston" 50-75 cents	Dec. 14
14.	Odd Fellows Lecture Rev. Luther F. McKinney, "Brotherhood of Man"  (in Union Hall) Y. P. U. Lecture Prof. E. T. Quimby, Dartmouth Coll., "Motion"	Dec. 15
15.	Reform Club (details in Chapter II)	Dec. 13-16
16.	Y. M. C. A. Lecture Wendell Phillips, "The Lost Arts"	Dec. 17
17.	Reform Club many signers	Dec. 18
18.	Reform Club Dr. Bouton	Dec. 20
19.	Reform Club 950 members	Dec. 20
21.	Y. P. U. double bill "Don Caesar de Bazan" Don Caesar, N. C. Nelson Maritana, Mrs. G. S. Locke "My Turn Next" Ned Kimball Crowded house	Dec. 20, 22
21. 22.	Union Hall, Antiquarian Dinner, 12 -2 daily, by ladies of First Congregational Church, for furnishing the new meeting house. Bean porridge, baked beans, chicken pie, boiled dish, indian pudding, pan dowdy, hominy and milk, baked sweet apples, pies, &c, &c. 50 cents. 300 served first day, many more on second; profits several hundreds.	Dec. 18, 21, 22
23.	Reform Club	Dec. 23
24.	Ditto	Dec. 23



Hastily yours, J. H. Alton

Respectfully  
Theodore Thomas.  
Chicago June, 92.



THEO. THOMAS'  
in 1876



Bookings, 1875-76

Dec. 25.	Universalist Christmas Festival	Dec. 23, 27
Dec. 28.	Y. P. U. Social Department 10 cents	Dec. 28
Dec. 29.	Reform Club	Dec. 30
Dec. 30.	Hook and Ladder-Alert Hose Ball Blaisdell's Orchestra, 9 pcs H. W. Ranlet, director Supper in Union Hall \$1	Dec. 17, 31
Dec. 31.	Reform Club	Dec. 31, Jan. 1
Jan. 2.	Reform Club Blaisdell's Orchestra	Jan. 3
4.	Annual Meeting, Old Charitable (moved from City Hall, then in use for LePage murder trial)	Jan. 6
	Union Hall) Y. P. U. Literary Department	Jan. 3
7.	Theodore Thomas Orchestra, 60 pcs Tannhaeuser Overture, "The music of the future", Wagner Andante and finale, 1st Symphony, Beethoven Siegfried's Love Song, from Walkure, Wagner Mr. H. A. Bischoff Hungarian Rhapsody, No. 14 Liszt Overture, Midsummer Night's Dream, Mendelssohn Traumerei, Schumann Il Bravo, Mercadante Mr. Bischoff Ballet Music and Wedding Procession, Rubenstein Torchlight March Mayerbeer <i>Program, B. White Collection</i>	Jan. 8
9.	Reform Club	Jan. 8
10.	Skiff and Gaylord's Minstrels 35-50 cents	Jan. 8
14.	Baker and Farron, "Heinrich and Hettie" 35, 50, 75 cents	Jan. 8
12.	(Union Hall) Y. P. U. Scientific Department	Jan. 11
16.	Reform Club 50 pledges, 1800 to date	Jan. 17
20.	Y. M. C. A. Lecture Rev. E. C. Bolles, "An Evening With the Microscope"	
22.	Lecture, Theodore Tilton, "The Problem of Life"	Jan. 24
25.	(Union Hall) Y. P. U. Literary Department	Jan. 25



-27-  
Bookings, 1875-76

- Jan. 28. Y. P. U. "Damon and Pythias" Jan. 7, 22, 27, 29  
Blaisdell's Orchestra  
Balcony, 35 cents  
Floor, 25 cents  
(Other details in Chapter II) *Program, B. G. White Collection*
- Feb. 2. Y. P. U. "Damon and Pythias" repeated Feb. 3  
for benefit of the company
4. Shepard's Jubilee Singers Feb. 5  
25, 50 cents
6. Benefit for J. K. Osgood, temperance revivalist Feb. 2, 7  
10 cents
8. Women's Centennial Executive Committee Jan. 29  
Supper in Union Hall Feb. 9  
Mrs. Jarley's Wax Works in Opera House  
A large loan exhibit of antiquities
9. Centennial Assembly under same auspices Feb. 10
11. Union Square Comedy Company Feb. 11  
Boucicault's "Lad Astray"
15. Y. P. U. double bill Feb. 16  
Burlesque operetta, directed  
by J. H. Morey, "Capuletta, or  
Romeo and Juliet Revived", Ned  
Kimball as Juliet  
"The Freedom of the Press" *Program, B. G. White Collection*
17. Afternoon meeting of women to further the Feb. 15, 19  
Home for the Aged. Organized an  
association
20. Lecture by Rev. R. G. Toles in behalf of the Home Feb. 21  
for Little Wanderers
21. Dr. E. C. Bolles, another "Evening With the Micro- Feb. 14,  
scope", plant life, blood, Concord granite 15, 22
25. "Laila", a children's operetta under the direction Feb. 9, 12  
26. of Miss Carrie E. Gray, Dover 24, 26  
Blaisdell's Orchestra  
Laila, Ella Stevens  
Fairy Queen, Amelia Gordon  
Fairy Dance, Amy and Mabel Chase  
Eva Eastman, Maud Dixon  
Others in cast, Renie and Hattie Emery  
Mabel Dwight, Flora Doane,  
Maud Noyes.  
Between scenes, Reuben & Rachel, Maud Dixon  
and Jennie Greeley  
Flower Girl, Cora Hill  
For the second time since the Opera House  
opened, the Monitor lectured people for  
rushing out during the final scene.

*Program, B. G. White Collection*



In "Our Days" (H. C. Pearson's notes): Geo. C. Cowper, Maud Granger  
L. S. Murdoch, Owen Marlow, Katharine Rogers, Miss M. Hart



<sup>928</sup>  
Bookings, 1875-76

- |          |  |                   |
|----------|--|-------------------|
| Feb. 22. | (Union Hall) Y. P. U. Literary Department  | Feb. 21           |
| 24.      | Reform Club State Convention<br>A drawing of the scene, published<br>in the N. Y. <u>Graphic</u> is in the<br>Concord Room<br>Day and evening  | Feb. 24, 25       |
| March 1. | John Murray and Grace Lillian<br>"Rip Van Winkle"  | Feb. 26, Mar. 2-4 |
| 2.       | The same<br>Murray's "Estranged"   |                   |
| 3.       | The same<br>"Out of the Depths" (temperance play)  |                   |
| 4.       | Matinee for ladies and children by same<br>"Rip"<br><br>Evening, by same<br>"The Ticket of Leave Man"  |                   |
| 6.       | Meeting of Concord Ladies Centennial Association<br>for a Home for the Aged  | Feb. 29<br>Mar. 9 |
| 8.       | Apron Sale and Supper, Pleasant St. Baptist Ladies<br>Concord Brass Band, H. G. Blaisdell Director<br>Arion Quartet  | Mar. 6, 9         |
| 21.      | Y. P. U. Literary Department (Union Hall)  | Mar. 20           |
| 30.      | Globe Theater Company, Boston, George Honey et al.<br>"Our Days" as played 200 nights in London, 77 in Boston<br>Blaisdell's Orchestra<br>75 cents <i>Program, B. B. White Collection</i>                  | Mar. 25, 31       |
| 31.      | Fancy Dress Party of Universalist Ladies   | Mar. 25           |
| Apr. 16. | Y. P. U. "Our American Cousin" <i>Program, B. B. White Collection</i>  | Apr. 1<br>Apr. 7  |
| 12.      | Lecture, Ann Eliza Young, "My Life in Bondage"   | Apr. 14           |
| 13.      | Berger Family and Sol Smith Russell<br>A musical hodge podge<br>Impersonations by Russell, including<br>one of John B. Gough which was per-<br>fect and inoffensive <i>Program, B. B. White Collection</i> | Apr. 14           |
| 20.      | Benefit for Blaisdell's Orchestra<br>Miss Abbie Whinnery, soloist  | Apr. 21           |
| 19.      | Return engagement of Berger and Russell  | Apr. 19           |
| 23.      | Reform Club  | Apr. 22, 24       |
| 25.      | Y. P. U. Social Department   | Apr. 24           |



What? a Sentiment?

Love my <sup>72</sup>  
Frank Mayo



Bookings, 1875-76

- Apr. 27. Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack  
"Life on the Border"  
Mlle Morlacchi, dancer, "Thrice Married" Apr. 22, 28
- May 1. Unitarian May Festival May 1, 2
4. Afternoon meeting, Concord Ladies Association  
for Home for Aged May 5
9. Y. P. U. "Ingomar, the Barbarian" May 4, 6, 10, 11  
Ingomar, N. C. Nelson  
Parthenia, Mrs. G. S. Locke  
Polydor, Mr. Alden  
Parthenia's Mother, Miss Cook  
Timon, (John E. S.) Robertson  
Timarch, James R. Saye *Program, B. B. White Collection*
12. Afternoon meeting, Concord Ladies Association May 8  
for Home for Aged
13. Frank Mayo in "Davy Crockett" May 10, 13
15. Adjourned meeting, Ladies, Home for Aged May 13
16. Harrigan & Hart in "The Doyle Brothers" May 9, 17  
(Union Hall) Y. P. U. Annual Meeting May 15, 17
18. South Sabbath School May Festival May 16, 18
23. Y. P. U. Social Department Dance May 17, 24  
Blaisdell's Orchestra
24. Republican Conventions to name delegates for May 24  
Cincinnati Convention  
(W. O. H.) State Convention, J. H. Gallinger  
Chmn. Resolutions Com.  
(W. O. H.) Second Congressional Dist. Convention  
(Union) Third Congressional Dist.
25. Afternoon meeting, Ladies, Home for Aged May 24, 26  
(Union Hall eve.) Y. P. U. adjourned meeting May 24
- June 1. Y. P. U. Dickens's "The Cricket on the Hearth" May 27, Ju. 3
6. Independent Club (Catholic) dramatics June 6, 7  
"Ireland As It Is"  
"Paddy Miles's Boy"  
Among the players were  
William H. Happny  
Thomas Gallagher  
Mary Twomey



Bookings, 1875-76.

- |          |   |             |
|----------|---|-------------|
| June 15. | Globe Theater Troupe in Robertson's "Caste"<br>Old Eccles, George Honey, who created part<br>Sam Gerridge, J. H. Burnell<br>Capt. Hawtree, J. W. Lanergan, who first played it in US<br>George D'Alroy, Gustavus Levick (replaced H.S. Mirdock)<br>Dixon, P. R. Leyman<br>Esther Eccles, Mrs. Thomas Barry (of Boston Theater,<br>replacing Miss Lillian Conway, ill)<br>Polly Eccles, Laura Joyce<br>Marquise de St. Maur, Mrs. Lanergan | June 10, 16 |
| 16.      | Concord High School Graduation Exercises  | June 17     |
| 19.      | Strawberry and Flower Festival, benefit of<br>Home for Aged<br>Blaisdell's Orchestra<br>Arion Club<br>Tableaus, etc.  | June 10, 20 |
| 22.      | Rudolphsen English Opera Company of Boston<br>Balfe's "Sleeping Queen"<br>Sullivan's "Cox and Box"<br>Miss Starbird<br>Miss Holmes<br>Mr. Tower<br>Mr. Rudolphsen   | June 17, 23 |
| 26.      | Lectures by Prof. O. S. Fowler, English phre-   | June 21     |
| 27.      | nologist  |             |
| 28.      | Both afternoon and evening the 28th.  |             |
| July 13. | Reception by Gov. and Mrs. P. C. Cheney<br>Blaisdell's Orchestra<br>Dooling's refreshments  | July 7      |
| 14.      | (Union Hall) Meeting to organize Home for<br>Aged under new act of in-<br>corporation   | July 14     |
| 19.      | Temperance Lecture, T. S. Lambert, M. D.  | July 18, 20 |
| 28.      | (Opera House) Adjourned meeting to organ-<br>ize Home for Aged. Organized   | July 29     |

Avoiding duplications, when the Opera House and Union Hall were both occupied for the same affair, the bookings for the first season were

White's Opera House alone,	112
Union Hall alone,	12
Total affairs,	<u>124</u>

For at least 60 of these Mr. White could have received little, if any, rental.



III

DEPTHS OF DEPRESSION.

Season of 1876-77.

The second season of the Opera House showed a lessened use as compared with the first. Two notable events were the reception by Mr. and Mrs. White on November 1, 1876, and the reception on August 22, 1877, for President Hayes and his party.

Musically the chief events were the appearance of the Philharmonic Club of Boston in the Opera House Course on October 5, 1876, of Myron W. Whitney and others on November 23, 1876, of the Bay State English Opera Company in "The Bohemian Girl" on November 16, 1876, and of the Boston Lyceum Opera Company in "Maritana". All of these in the same course, directed by J. H. Morey and John A. White, son of Nathaniel White, made an outstanding series. The Y. M. C. A. yielded the field as far as this course was concerned. The lecture field was neglected except for the popular course conducted by the Y. P. U., which, though almost wholly confined to local speakers, presented some things of real moment.

For professional drama Augustin Daly sent on his New York company in his play "Pique", the excellent Boston Theatre Company appeared in a double bill, W. J. LeMoyne did the part of Uriah Heep, and there were sundry other traveling companies of less caliber. The largest house of the season was packed in by the ever-popular Maggie Mitchell in "Mignon".

The inimitable Sol Smith Russell again pleased with impersonations, there were Swiss bell-ringers, and two burlesque companies, including one from the Old Howard. Among the minstrels of note who appeared were Hank White, Milt Barlow, and Primrose and West, and George Wilson. The writer saw the last three in their own



company years later, and can attest the truth that they were great artists in their peculiar line. Buffalo Bill made his annual appearance and brought with him Captain Jack, the Post Scout of the Black Hills, who favored Concord with an original ballad into which he introduced the Concord Coach. From a hundred performances at the Boston Museum came the famous musical extravaganza, "Evangeline", with the equally famous Nat Goodwin and the no less famous Golden and Dixey. It was the biggest show that had ever appeared here.

For amateur dramatics there came a company from Boston headed by Lorin Deland. But local competition in this field did not yield to outside talent. The Independent Club continued in operation and the new Emmet Club added two appearances in Irish plays.

The Y. P. U. dramatics languished, not for lack of talent, but because, partly due to weather, they had reduced audiences. To this discouraging factor was added a growth of jealousies among the group. But it remained a really outstanding group, for all that, furnishing smooth performances in every case. The group was so numerous that on successive nights they appeared in two plays without duplication in the casts. They repeated "Demon and Pythias" with increased effect, and also "Ingomar", but their new offerings were of less moment. Early in August, 1877, they lost one of their most talented members, who perished in a fire at Straw's Point, Willie F. Groves, an Englishman who had come over to work in Durgin's silverware factory. He had a tenor voice, directed the Universalist choir, during the evenings taught singing in groups by a method that was adopted by the New England Conservatory. Besides that, he composed, and it was for the preparation and rehearsal of an invocation at St. Andrew's-by-the-Sea that he was at Rye when the end came. In dramatics his favorite parts were old men's, one of



best of which was John Peeribingle in Dickens's "Cricket on the Hearth". When he died at twenty-seven Concord lost an artist of high promise and great versatility. (Monitor, May 25, July 6, August 6, 1877).

Season of 1877-78.

The third full season of the Young People's Union, the second in the Opera House built for them having shown a decline, the question arose at once as to plans for the future. For three years they had put on a monthly dramatic bill, with only one or two omissions. In the early fall of 1877 they let it be known that they must give up the monthly bill, but that they were planning for a continuation of their dramatic offerings. (Monitor, September 12, 1877). All that was changed forever within three weeks. On October 2, 1877, the Monitor announced the formation of the Concord Art Club for dramatics. The President was William E. Stevens, the Business Manager was Dr. C. N. Towle, J. E. Robertson was Treasurer, Henri G. Blaisdell Musical Director, and stage management in the competent hands of Nathaniel C. Nelson, as it had been in the Y. P. U.

But what of the Social, Scientific and Literary Departments of the Union? They too were moribund, and the demise of one of the most interesting movements in Concord's social history was near. Once more there was a social evening in the Opera House on October 31. After that, we note such an affair held in Eagle Hall (Monitor, December 19, 1877). They were having financial troubles, and the new Concord Art Club gave them a benefit on November 27. For all that the Union died. Had Mr. and Mrs. White transferred their philanthropic affections to the Centennial Home for the Aged, or had the young people simply tired of their Union? The secret history of the organization died with that generation of young folks. We hear nothing about them after December 19 except that they held an annual meeting somewhere in May, 1878, and re-elected officers (Monitor, 5/2/78).



Probably no little share in the death of the Union was borne by the depression that was coming to its nadir. By the early part of 1878 the desperate business men of Concord were meeting in Union Hall to discuss ways and means of getting a reduction of the rentals of stores and offices, and the landlords, equally desperate, were trying to avoid losses. Deflation was sternly in motion, and everybody felt too poor to waste money more than infrequently on frivolities. So White's Opera House had a very poor season, with only an occasional bright spot.

In September Kate Aston brought her company to the Opera House for two nights. The first night the audience was less than fifty. She was so outraged that she refused to appear on the stage. She left town for Montreal the next morning, leaving the house dark for the second night. The popular Henry Clay Barnabee drew only a small audience on October 6, and the Monitor sourly noted that some of his songs had a stale flavor. In November, Haverly's Minstrels, with the great George Thatcher, could draw only a fair-sized audience at thirty-five and fifty cents. In December Hartz the magician came for a solid week and drew large houses at the same price by means of giving away each night anything from a trifle to a chamber set furnished him at bargain prices by desperate local business men who wanted to advertise their slow-moving stocks.

There was no first-class lecture course. Mary A. Livermore and Henry Ward Beecher came independently, and the latter drew a full house. He could always do that in normal times. This time he brought with him the aroma of a hot and bitter and scandalous fight that kept some away and brought others in. The Pleasant Street Baptist Church, in need of money for repairs, put on a "Superior Course" in the Opera House, at the bargain price of \$1.25 for the series. There were only fair audiences.



There were some exceptions to the rule of little or moderate patronage. We are not told how great an audience Kate Claxton drew on September 17 in "The Two Orphans". Janaushek, the tragedienne, had a large audience on October 12 when she played Schiller's "Mary Stuart". She was rated foremost after the death of Charlotte Cushman, and, though I never saw her, I well remember as a small boy that an aunt who yearned for culture simply must see her perform whenever she came to Concord. Buffalo Bill, fresh from the Indian war that brought Custer to his end, drew a large audience on November 1. "Uncle Tom's Cabin" attracted over a thousand on January 18, when the Wilkinsons gave their three hundred and first performance of the play. George Rignold introduced Shakespeare to the Opera House stage when he performed "Henry V" on February 18 before a good audience. The stage was too small, yet the performance was good.

It will be noted that Concord was affording a large audience only once a month. On March 1, all records were broken, and probably made for all time, when the splendid Boston Museum Company put on Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer". The audience must have been nearly 1200. Every seat was taken, chairs crowded the aisles (thank God, there was no stampede), and there were fifty standees. When the same company came back on April 10 to give "Heir at Law" as played by them over 200 nights at the Museum, not even the great William Warren and the great Mrs. Vincent could draw more than a fair audience.

#### Season of 1878-79.

The fourth season of White's Opera House opened in September with the depression still very painful. A political campaign was on in which the Democrats charged President Hayes with all the economic ills incident to post-war deflation. To make matters worse,